

Pillsbury Milling Complex,
Cleaning House
315-335 Main Street Southeast
Minneapolis
Hennepin County
Minnesota

HABS No. MN-29-5-F

HABS
MINN,
27-MINAP
3-F-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Rocky Mountain Regional Office
Department of the Interior
P.O. Box 25287
Denver, Colorado 80225

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27-MIN
3-F-

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

PILLSBURY MILLING COMPLEX,
CLEANING HOUSE

HABS No. MN-29-5F

Location: 315-335 Main Street S.E., Minneapolis, Hennepin
County, Minnesota.

USGS Minneapolis South Quadrangle, Universal
Transverse Mercator Coordinates: Zone 15;
480100:4981060; 480320:4980940; 480260:4980800;
480040:4980940

Present Owner: The Pillsbury Company
Pillsbury Center
200 South Sixth Street
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55402

Present Occupant: The Pillsbury Company

Present Use: Flour Milling

Significance: The Cleaning House is associated with the
expansion of the Pillsbury "A" Mill in 1916, when
the South "A" Mill was also constructed.
Cleaning machinery was moved from the Pillsbury
"A" Mill to the new Cleaning House, greatly
increasing the milling capacity of the mill.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: August - October 1916
2. Architect: Barnett & Record Co.
Engineer: E.S. Wardell
3. Original and subsequent owners: The exact legal description is
not known, however, the Cleaning House appears to lie on parts
of Lots 15, 16 and 17, Block 50, Town of St. Anthony Falls.

1880 Deed, February 11, 1880, recorded March 13, 1880 in Book
83, Page 516. Lot 15 and part of Lot 16. Franklin
Steele and Annie E. Steele to Charles A. Pillsbury.
Frederick C. Pillsbury, George A. Pillsbury and John S.
Pillsbury.

1883 Deed, October 15, 1883, recorded November 14, 1883, in
Book 140, Page 109. Part of Lots 16 and 17. Calvin N.
Warner and Charlotte Warner and Simon D. Rollins and
Janette E. Rollins to George A. Pillsbury, John S.
Pillsbury, Charles A. Pillsbury and Fred C. Pillsbury.

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- 1889 Pillsbury-Washburn Flour Mills Co. purchased C.A. Pillsbury Co.
- 1908 Pillsbury Flour Mills Co. formed.
- 1944 Name changed to Pillsbury Mills, Inc.
- 1548 Name changed to The Pillsbury Company
- 4. Builder, contractor, suppliers: Barnett & Record Co., general contractor. Pierson Wilcox Co., electric contractor. Permit numbers A13364 for \$200,000 and F85503 for \$450 respectively.
- 5. Original plans and construction: Original plans are on file at The Pillsbury Co. in Minneapolis. Building is not significantly altered.
- 6. Alterations and additions: Historical photographs indicate that a smoke or exhaust stack has been added. Glass block windows were installed in 1954 (permit #A31463) in place of the original transom windows. On March 18, 1955 an explosion and a series of fires damaged the Cleaning House. The impact blew out brick walls separating sections of the building and equipment was heavily damaged. Total damage was estimated to be \$25,000.

B. Historical Context:

The Cleaning House is an integral part of the milling complex. Grain stored in the adjacent elevators is carried to the Cleaning House on a system of elevators and belts. In the Cleaning House all foreign substances are removed from the wheat, after which the kernel is scoured in revolving machines to take off the fine hairs attached to the wheat berry. The wheat is then washed and dried in centrifugal machines, then tempered before being sent through the mill.

The milling complex is located in the St. Anthony Falls Historic District, a National Register Historic District, and, in addition, the Pillsbury "A" Mill is designated as a National Historic Landmark.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

- 1. Architectural Character: The Cleaning House is a nine story brick and concrete structure built in 1916. Although not of a distinctive architectural style, the building is imposing in size. The window bays are set back approximately one foot, allowing the large structural columns to show the building's composition and symmetry.

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2. Condition of Fabric: The exterior is in fair condition, with patches of the brick skin having crumbled slightly or showing water stains. On the facade facing the river, two windows have been filled in with concrete block, three appear new and one appears to be plate glass. This is also evident on the north facade where five windows have been filled in. The window sills appear to be in poor shape, showing severe crumbling.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Overall Dimensions: Situated on Lots 15, 16 and 17 or Block 50, the Cleaning House measures 233' across the front, 150' deep, and 146' high, capped by a 50,000 gallon water tank on a steel trestle 25' above the roof. Access to the building is from the rear (north) where trucks and trains are loaded. Mainly a large rectangle, there are some setbacks and extensions on the sides facing the tile elevator and the "A" Mill respectively.
2. Foundations: Reinforced concrete footings support the concrete and brick framework.
3. Walls: Composed of gray concrete block and brick, the facades show very little in texture or detail. The only hint of texture is found in the cap above the top windows where the brickwork, over the course of six stepbacks, comes flush to the concrete block. The top five floors have walls 8" thick in the front portion of the building and 12" thick in the rear.
4. Structural System: The structural system consists of reinforced concrete, brick curtain walls and fire walls. Brick is found in the window bay areas with the concrete block used in columns spaced equally across the facade.
5. Chimneys: A small stack appears between the Cleaning House and the "A" Mill rising from the third level. It is supported by twin wire supports to the Cleaning House and by butting up to the wall of the annex connecting the two structures.
6. Openings:
 - a. Doorways and doors: Due to being enclosed by buildings on three sides, there are no visible doorways. On the north elevation there is a metal shed covering over the train and truck loading location. We were unable to determine if there were doorways in this restricted area, but viewing from a distance, we could assume a central doorway into the building was located there.

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- b. Windows: Glass block windows were installed in 1954, replacing the original transom windows. Originally 36 windows adorned the south facade along the top six stories. Two have been concrete blocked in, three have new glass block, and one was fitted with plate glass (2 pieces). Six fan hoods and eight fan hood openings, replacing some of the glass block, are scattered over the facade. One lone pipe protrudes from the facade. Also, showing up in earlier photos, in the second from the right and the second level up is a window from which pipes were connected to trains stationed underneath it waiting to be filled. The east elevation is made up of combinations of large glass block and small (half size) openings. The small openings have a brick mullion dividing them, breaking a large opening into two. The north elevation has windows on the top 5 stories, whereas the south has windows on the top 6. Besides having five large windows blocked up, three other combinations of windows are found. Divided into 6 bays across, either large glass block windows, double smaller windows, or single smaller windows are situated into the 6 x 5 grid. Four fans protrude from the exterior, three showing heavy flour exhaust marks.

7. Roof:

- a. Shape: The roof is slightly sloped down from the front center, ending in a small stone cornice which wraps the entire top edge of the building.
- b. Towers: Adorning the top is a galvanized 50,000 gallon water tower on a steel trestle 25' above the roof. A enclosed conveyor runs across the roof top, connecting from the tile elevator to the "A" Mill.

C. Description of Interior:

- 1. General: Inaccessible, although we were able to find out that wheat and starch bins for feed are found running from the fifth floor to the basement. Augers, scales, and garnerers were also located inside the Cleaning House, our source indicated. Floors in the rear portion are 1" concrete and in the front portion are maple over pine.

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D. Site:

1. General Setting: The Cleaning House is located in the Pillsbury Milling Complex on the east shore of the Mississippi River in what was the Town of St. Anthony. The Cleaning House is in the center of the complex surrounded by Pillsbury "A" Mill, the Tile Elevator, and the South "A" Mill.
2. Landscape: None.

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

- A. Original Architectural Drawings: Original architectural drawings for the Cleaning House are on file at The Pillsbury Company, Pillsbury Center, 200 South Sixth Street, Minneapolis, Minnesota.
- B. Early Views: General views are in the Minnesota Historical Society Picture Collection (View of Milling District c. 1940, Pillsbury "A" Mill Complex c. 1918, View c. 1971, View from River c. 1950, Complex c. 1976, View c. 1948, Construction c. 1918.)
- C. Bibliography:
 1. Primary and unpublished sources:

Building Permits, City of Minneapolis (#s A13364, F85503, A31463)

Deed Records, Hennepin County Government Center.

Building Plans, The Pillsbury Co., Minneapolis.

Insurance Maps, Minnesota Historical Society (1940 Sanborn, 1912 Sanborn, 1906 Rascher)
 2. Secondary and published sources:

Minneapolis Star Newspaper, March 18, 1955, Minneapolis Public Library.

Gray, James. Business Without Boundary, The Story of General Mills. University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 1974.

Northwestern Miller, 50th Anniversary Number. Vol. 136-#14, 1923.

Pillsbury People, 75th Anniversary Diamond Jubilee Edition, 1869-1944.

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Powell, William J., Pillsbury's Best, Company's History from
1869.

Prepared by:
Cynthia Lee and
Mark Noble
University of Minnesota
April 1987

PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

This project was prepared as a class project for Architecture 5143, Historic Building Research and Documentation, a class offered in the School of Architecture and Landscape Architecture at the University of Minnesota. The class project was prepared under the direction of Professor Foster W. Dunwiddie in cooperation with the State Historic Preservation Office of the Minnesota Historical Society, Saint Paul, Minnesota. Historical data was compiled by Cynthia Lee and Mark Noble, University of Minnesota, April 1987.